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**Mississippi Department of
Information Technology Services**

David C. Johnson, Executive Director

RFP Questions and Clarifications Memorandum

To: Vendors Responding to RFP Number 4282-45687 for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)

From: David C. Johnson

Date: September 1, 2021

Subject: Responses to Questions Submitted and Clarifications to Specifications

Contact Name: Khelli Reed

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RFP Number 4282 is hereby amended as follows:

1. **Attachment A, Item Number 233, is hereby deleted.**

   ~~Solution must capture, maintain, and transmit all the FDP data elements necessary for the USDA to calculate annual entitlement rates.~~

2. **Section VIII Cost Information Submission is being replaced with the attached Revised Cost Information Submission form.**

Vendor must include in their proposal a response to each amended requirement as listed above. Vendor must respond using the same terminology as provided in the original requirements.

The following questions were submitted to ITS and are being presented as they were submitted, except to remove any reference to a specific vendor. This information should assist you in formulating your response.

Question 1: Are you looking for an off-the-shelf solution or customized software designed and developed from scratch? Our process involves workshops on product strategy and design at an early stage, even before the software is programmed, making the process much simpler and more transparent.

Response: **MDE expects the FDP solution to be a commercially available product. MDE expects the APS solution to be substantially commercial. MDE is not seeking solutions developed from scratch.**

Question 2: Is there any budget limit you need to fit? What's the price range you aim at?

Response: **A budget has not been established for this project. However, all State Agency budgets are considered public record and may be viewed at www.transparency.ms.gov.**

Question 3: Are you looking for US-based vendors only? We're based in Europe.

Response: **Companies outside of Mississippi and/or the United States may respond to the RFP; however, the awarded Vendor must be able to meet all legal requirements to conduct business in the United States and Mississippi, as well as meet the requirements provided in the RFP and exhibits. Vendors should carefully review all requirements to determine whether Vendor(s) can comply with said requirements.**

Question 4: If not, do you have any additional requirements for international contractors?

Response: **See response to Question 3.**

Question 5: RFP: (ITS RFP Response Checklist) – On the RFP checklist (Pg 2) number 6- the state is requesting a "Point-by-point response to Technical Specifications (Section VII)" - Can you please clarify? Section VII only contains instructions for the response and scoring. Not sure how to answer this section as requested.

Response: **Section VII of the RFP provides information to assist the Vendors with background information needed to prepare their proposal. This section also directs the Vendors to Attachment A, which lists the Functional and Technical Requirements. Section I, Item 1 of Attachment A details how vendor should respond to requirements.**

Question 6: RFP: (Section IV: Legal and Contractual Information; Section VIII: Cost Information Submission; Exhibit A Standard Contract) – Questions 28, 29, 30, and Section VIII seem to imply a perpetual license request; however, Exhibit A for a sample Standard Contract is a SaaS Agreement. Can MS ITS provide an explanation of the expected agreement for RFP 4282 to deliver both an FDP and APS solution?

Response: **Section IV, Item 28 of the RFP, refers to ownership of developed software, if applicable. Item 29 refers to ownership of custom tailored Software, if applicable. Item 30 refers to the terms of software licenses and states that the license shall be perpetual *unless stated otherwise in the vendor's proposal*. For any licensed services proposed by the Vendor, Vendor should describe such services and provide related costs in the Section VIII Cost Information Submission form. The Cost Information Submission form anticipates terms of service being years one through five. Vendors may modify the Cost Information Submission form as appropriate to fit their offering, so long as the State can clearly evaluate total implementation costs, recurring annual costs for years one through five, and a grand total for the Vendor's proposal. The State expects to enter into a SaaS Agreement with the awarded Vendor for the provision, hosting, support, and maintenance of the FDP and APS solutions.**

Question 7: Att. A: (Section I.C, General Overview and Background, Item 11) – Does this require integration with Contracts (SNP)? If not, will the state provide the import (from their external system) on the total lunches that is required for PAL?

Response: **No, the solution does not require integration with Contracts (SNP). Yes, the State will provide import data as required.**

Question 8: Att. A: (Section I.D, Procurement Goals and Objectives, Item 17) – Please define interacting/interfacing with WBSCM?

Response: **Refer to Section I.H. which requires responding Vendors to have previous experience in the development, configuration, implementation, testing, user training, hosting, maintenance, and support of food distribution (FDP) software designed to interact with the USDA WBSCM program. All three of the Vendor references submitted in Section IX of the RFP must substantiate this experience.**

Question 9: Att. A: (Section I.D, Procurement Goals and Objectives, Item 19) – Can a list of the manual processes requiring automation be provided?

Response: **The State expects that existing commercial FDP and APS products will remedy most of MDE's manual processes. Some examples of manual processes cited in Attachment A are USDA Bonus Offerings, Surplus Offerings, FDP Accounting, and Bidding.**

Question 10: Att. A: (Section I.D, Procurement Goals and Objectives, Item 21) – Can a list be provided of the legacy data that must be converted and more detail regarding the required conversion process?

Response: **Section I.D, Item 21 describes a broad procurement goal and objective. Refer to Attachment A, Item V.A. Data Migration for specific requirements related to the current FDP and APS databases. Because the referenced MDE databases currently reside in a non-proprietary format (SQL) and because the proposed solution databases must reside in a non-proprietary format, the State does not expect conversion to be necessary. However, if conversion is necessary for the Vendor's proposed, non-proprietary solutions, then the Vendor is responsible for conversion services at the cost outlined in the Vendor's Section VIII Cost Information Submission.**

Question 11: Att. A: (Section I.E, Statement of Understanding, Item 29) – Can more details be provided on the required implementation timeline?

Response: **MDE desires to have the FDP solution to be implemented by the end of January 2022. MDE desires to have the APS solution implemented by the end of June 2022.**

Question 12: Att. A: (Section II.B, Mobile Access) – Does the state foresee RAs utilizing a mobile solution for the scanning/tracking of commodity foods?

Response: **The State does not currently require mobile scanning of commodity food items. Refer to Item II.B. in Attachment A for mobile requirements.**

Question 13: Att. A: (Section II.C, General, Item 75) – What are MDE data elements?

Response: **MDE data elements are common to automated food purchasing and distribution processes. Refer to the WBSCM website for material data information.**
https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-foods/fns-wbscm-data-information

Question 14: Att. A: (Section II.C, General, Item 76) – What are MDE data elements?

Response: **MDE data elements for APS are common to automated food purchasing and delivery systems.**

Question 15: Att. A: (Section II.C, General, Item 78) – What is MS definition of an electronics signature?

Response: **MDE does not presently require digital signatures but desires the capability for future use. For example, bid submissions, delivery receipts, etc.**

Question 16: Att. A: (Section II.C, General, Item 79) – Standard email templates: Can more details be provided on where these will be used?

Response: **As an example, MDE may need to send notification emails to select RAs informing them of upcoming programmatic actions such as rebates, refunds, and promotional allowances, etc.**

Question 17: Att. A: (Section II.D, Administrative Management, Item 93) – Please provide more details or examples for: "must be highly configurable".

Response: **MDE considers its food distribution workflows to be typical of automated food purchasing systems and expects configurability to be inherent to the proposed solution.**

Question 18: Att. A: (Section II.D, Administrative Management, Item 95) – Can more details be provided on the requirements for these reports?

Response: **MDE expects all food purchasing and distribution data elements housed by the solution to be reportable. Upon implementation, the solution will contain the necessary data elements to produce the reports cited in Item 95 of Attachment A.**

Question 19: Att. A: (Section II.E, Workflow, Item 98) – What types of food purchasing and distribution events will need to have configurable triggers? Can two examples of triggers and the associated events that will result in automatic updates to targeted MDE food purchasing and distribution processes be provided?

Response: **MDE considers its food distribution workflows to be typical of automated food purchasing systems and expects configurability to be inherent to the proposed solutions. A trigger might be an alert that pops up when a user selects a delivery date outside the assigned range. The solution should allow the user to make the appropriate adjustments. Another example might be**

the ability to modify purchasing approval authorities in response to user requests.

Question 20: Att. A: (Section II.H, Calendar Function, Item 127) – What type of food distribution practices will need to have calendar functions?

Response: **MDE is bound to programmatic planning and ordering deadlines associated with food purchasing and distribution. For example, MDE needs a solution to generate calendars based on food distribution data, needs to be able to share calendars with participating entities, and needs configurable meeting notification and event fields, etc.**

Question 21: Att. A: (Section II.J, Document Manager, Item 136) – Is scanning and indexing required in both FDP and ASP applications?

Response: **Yes, the solutions must accommodate typical scanning capabilities.**

Question 22: Att. A: (Section II.K, Reports and Dashboards, Item 159) – Can a list of the required food status reports be provided, including requirements of each report?

Response: **Refer to Item 159 in Attachment A which offers examples of related data elements to be tracked and reported. They are: item ID number, item description, storage type, gross pounds per case, and entitlement values per pound, case, and truckload. Upon implementation, the solutions will contain the necessary data elements to produce the required reports.**

Question 23: Att. A: (Section II.K, Reports and Dashboards, Item 162) – Please provide more details of the Notice of Arrival reports including when is the item considered arrived.

Response: **In the incumbent solution, notices of arrivals are tracked manually. Upon receipt by distributors, the distributors manually provide arrival information to MDE and MDE manually enters it into the incumbent solution. This information is subsequently uploaded to WBSCM by MDE. The item is considered to be *arrived* when the contracted distributor designates the material as having been received in the FDP solution.**

Question 24: Att. A: (Section II.K, Reports and Dashboards, Item 162) – Regarding the Notice of Arrival, Notice of Allocation, Notice of Cancellation Reports, is this in reference to the Sales Order Status data from WBSCM?

Response: **Yes, the Notice of Arrival, Notice of Allocation, and Notice of Cancellation Reports are in reference to the Sales Order Status data from WBSCM.**

Question 25: Att. A: (Section II.K, Reports and Dashboards, Item 171) – Can more detail be provided on the requirements for the Distributor Fill Rate Report?

Response: **For each line item, MDE requires the ability to query a specific distributor for a specific period of time in order to calculate the fill rate. For example, if a distributor filled 75 out of 100 cases during a particular time period, his fill**

rate for that time period would be 75%. Likewise, MDE requires the ability to query aggregate line items for specific distributors for specific time periods.

Question 26: Att. A: (Section II.L, Archival (Both Solutions), Item 173) – What is the preferred non-proprietary format?

Response: **MDE does not have a preferred format other than it be non-proprietary and available to MDE for future use.**

Question 27: Att. A: (Section III.A, Catalog/Survey Requirements, Item 181) – Please define variable workflow approval processes.

Response: **Variable workflow approval means that the various approving authorities could have differing requirements (such as approval thresholds) and the solution must be configurable to accommodate their needs.**

Question 28: Att. A: (Section III.B, Recipient Agency (RA) Functions, Item 185) – Can more detail be provided on what is involved in electronic submission?

Response: **Current workflows allow RAs to progress through the ordering processes electronically. In the context of this requirement *submit* is a selection that moves the RA forward in the workflow.**

Question 29: Att. A: (Section III.G, FDP Accounting Requirements, Item 233) – Can more detail be provided on the specific data elements required for the annual entitlement rates calculation?

Response: **Item 233 of Attachment A is hereby deleted. See Amendment 1 above.**

Question 30: Att. A: (Section IV.D, Bid Module) – Can a list of the required features for this be provided?

Response: **The specific requirements for Bid Module are as stated in Section IV.D.**

Question 31: Att. A: (Section V.A, Data Migration, Item 260) – What is the non-proprietary format for Migrated databased content?

Response: **MDE does not have a preferred format other than it be non-proprietary and available to MDE for future use.**

Question 32: Att. A: (Section V.A, Data Migration, Item 262) – Can clarification be provided on how many years of migrated historical data will be required? In another area of RFP, it specified 3 years, but requesting clarification on this.

Response: **Migrated historical data must include three fiscal years prior to, and including, the current fiscal year.**

Question 33: Att. A: (Section V.A, Data Migration, Item 263) – Can additional details be provided on the requirements for data migrations? Does the state provide all data mapping documents? What part of data needs conversion and what type of conversion is it?

Response: **The State does not anticipate that conversion will be necessary, but if it is, the State will provide the necessary data mapping documents to the awarded vendor. Responding vendors must provide any the necessary data conversion and migration services at the cost submitted with their proposal.**

Question 34: Att. A: (Section V.A, Backup Services, Item 274) – What type of reports? System reports? User reports? Application/product related?

Response: **Refer to Item 274 in Attachment A which states that Solution must be capable of running backup reports on a weekly basis, or whatever sequence is required by MDE. For example, report should reveal which jobs successfully completed, which jobs failed, and which jobs restarted, etc. These are system related backups.**

Question 35: Att. A: (Section VI.C, Project Management Plan (Both Solutions), Item 296) – Are there timelines or deadlines MS ITS is seeking to meet through RFP 4282?

Response: **MDE desires to have the FDP solution to be implemented by the end of January 2022. MDE desires to have the APS solution implemented by the end of June 2022..**

Question 36: Att. A: (Section VI.C, Project Management Plan (Both Solutions), Item 299) – Can you please define the limited resources?

Response: **MDE will provide a project manager and a subject matter expert.**

Question 37: Att. A: (Section VI.D, Integration and/or Interfaces (Both), Item 300) – Can a list of the required interactions be provided?

Response: **Refer to Item 300 in Attachment A which characterizes the need for a known integration or interaction between the FDP and APS solutions and recognizes the potential for others. Others will be dependent on the capabilities of the awarded solutions, and MDE expects them to be revealed in the design and implementation process. Item 301 in Attachment A describes a specific, known need for interaction between the two solutions and outlines the required elements. MDE will work with the awarded Vendor and rely on the Vendor's expertise to maximize interactions where appropriate.**

Question 38: Att. A: (Section VI.D, Integration and/or Interfaces (Both)) – In addition to WBSCM, what other interfaces used by MDE will be integrated with the vendor's software?

Response: **MDE does not know of any additional interfaces at this time.**

Question 39: Att. A: (Section VI.F, Data Migration Plan (Both Solutions), Item 311) – Can more details be provided on the level of data migration required?

Response: **Refer to Item 258 in Attachment A, a) and b) for FDP and APS data characterizations. Refer to the answer to Question 32 for archival data characterization.**

Question 40: Att. A: (Section VI.G, User Acceptance Testing Plan (Both Solutions), Item 313A) – Can a list of the required MDE Interfaces be provided?

Response: **The interfaces specified in Attachment A include WBSCM and any necessary integrations, interactions, or interfaces between the FDP and APS solutions.**

Question 41: Att. A: (Section VI.H, User Training and Documentation (Both Solutions), Item 322) – Is MS ITS looking for vendor to train on WBSCM?

Response: **No, MDE is not looking for a Vendor to train on WBSCM.**

RFP responses are due September 21, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. (Central Time).

If you have any questions concerning the information above or if we can be of further assistance, please contact Khelli Reed at 601-432-8194 or via email at Khelli.Reed@its.ms.gov.

cc: ITS Project File Number 45687

Attachment: Revised Cost Information Submission